

the request to another call processor. Generally, the call processor will declare an overload condition if sufficient resources (such as processing or memory resources) are not available to process a given call. If a call processor determines that it is too congested to process a call, the call processor enters an overload condition, selects an alternate call processor and forwards the request to the alternate call processor. A given call processor implicitly announces its overload condition to another call processor by virtue of the forwarded congestion message. Each call processor maintains an ordered list of call processors that indicates whether or not each call processor is overloaded. The present invention attempts to distribute forwarded congestion messages among all of the available alternate call processors, for example, using a last message sent flag. Generally, a call processor in an overload condition will not forward another congestion message to a call processor having its last message sent flag set unless there are no other call processors available. The congested call processor attaches a call processor identifier to the forwarded congestion message, indicating to the recipient call processor that the congested call processor is in an overload condition. Thus, a forwarded congestion message will cause the recipient call processor to set a flag, for example, in the ordered list of call processors, indicating that the congested call processor is congested. In one embodiment, each congestion flag has an associated timer that causes the flag to expire (or reset) after a predefined time interval that permits the congested call processor to recover from the overload condition.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as indicated in the enclosed marked up version of the original specification. A substitute specification incorporating such changes is also submitted herewith. No new matter has been introduced.

REMARKS

The present application was filed on January 20, 2000 with claims 1 through 24. Claims 1 through 24 are presently pending in the above-identified patent application.